

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
294 WASHINGTON STREET, BOSTON, MA 02108

AREA	FORM NO.
F	302



wn Lexington

dress 37-39 Woburn Street

storic Name Merriam-Viles House

e: Present residential (double)

Original residential (single)

DESCRIPTION:

te c. 1750

Source former owner

Style Second Period Georgian

Architect \_\_\_\_\_

Exterior wall fabric clapboards

Outbuildings \_\_\_\_\_

Major alterations (with dates) rear

roof raised; side ell

from Massachusetts Avenue  
Moved at Winthrop Road Date March 23, 1894

Approx. acreage 0.1 acre

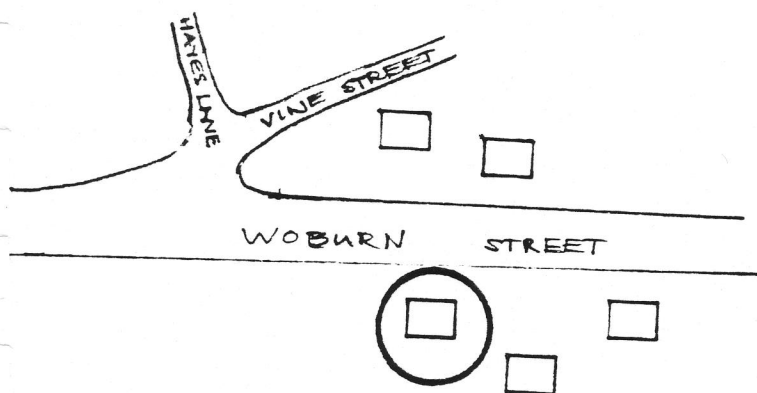
Setting On busy street lined with

nineteenth century workers housing;

abuts former railroad bed.

SKETCH MAP

Show property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and/or geographical features. Indicate all buildings between inventoried property and nearest intersection. Indicate north.



Recorded by Nancy S. Seasholes

Organization Lexington Historical Commission

Date April, 1984

(Staple additional sheets here)

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.)

Set on a busy street near mid-nineteenth century workers cottages and vernacular houses, this double house is actually a mid-eighteenth century house that was moved to this location. Only a few of the exterior finishes still remain, however: the clapboards on the facade; the window caps on the four easternmost second story windows; and the cornice molding at either end of the facade. The original four panel door is stored in the basement. According to the former owner, who is knowledgeable about historic houses, there are not

(see Continuation Sheet)

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.)

The house was originally on Massachusetts Avenue at about the present intersection of Winthrop Road. It belonged to Benjamin Merriam (1737-1806), who served in the Revolution, and is one of the houses pillaged by the British on April 19, 1775; Merriam's losses were valued at £223 4s., one of the highest in town (Hudson, I, p. 174), so at least part of the house may have been burned, as tradition claims. There used to be a plaque on the outside of the house that read: "House of Benjamin Merriam, one of the Minute Men whose family fled on the approach of the British, who pillaged the house, April 19, 1775" (Hudson, I, p. 552).

In the nineteenth century the house was owned by the Viles family: in 1852 by Joel Viles, a shoemaker and later a farmer, and in 1876 and 1889 by William Viles, a farmer. The Merriam-Viles house was moved to its present location on March 23, 1894, because Benjamin Tenney, husband of Mary Viles, had built a new house on the Massachusetts Avenue lot (Edwin Worthen to Eugene J. Viano, February 7, 1941). *(See 1536 Massachusetts Avenue)*

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES (name of publication, author, date and publisher)

Bryant, Albert W. "Lexington Sixty Years Ago," 1890. Proceedings of the Lexington Historical Society, Volume II, p. 57. Lexington: Lexington Historical Society, 1900.

Hudson, Charles. History of the Town of Lexington, revised and continued to 1912 by the Lexington Historical Society, Volume I, pp. 174, 552. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1913.

Kelley, Beverly Allison. Lexington, A Century of Photographs, p. 35. Boston: Lexington Historical Society, 1980.

Lexington Minute Man, March 23, 1894.

Edwin Worthen to Eugene J. Viano, February 7, 1941. Letter on file in the Worthen Collection, Cary Memorial Library, Lexington, Massachusetts.

1887 Directory

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: Lexington	Form No: 302
Property Name: 37-39 Woburn Street	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

many interior finishes, either. In the eastern apartment, however, there is a beaded chair rail and door casing, half of a raised field panel, a chamfered summer beam, and a fireplace now covered by a wall. In the western apartment, the original ceiling was discovered under the present one. The former had been painted with two coats of whitewash in which there was a bullet hole with soot still visible -- all consistent with the tradition of a British raid on April 19, 1775. On the basis of the paneling, butterfly hinges, and batten doors, the former owner estimates the date of construction at c. 1740-1750 (Philip Hagar, personal communication).

Staple to Inventory form at bottom